

**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR

**UNITED FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE
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I am proud to join the hundreds of thousands of Americans today who have come to our nation's capital to make their voices heard on the most important question confronting our democracy, and the millions around the country and people of goodwill the world over. Our message today is as simple and as profound as it was when we came together in the fall of 2002: You cannot win the just War on Terror by launching an unjustified War in Iraq!

The misguided, mismanaged, and costly debacle that is the Iraq War was preemptively launched by President Bush in March 2003

despite the opposition of me and 125 of my colleagues in the House of Representatives. To date, the war in Iraq has lasted longer than America's involvement in World War II, the greatest conflict in all of human history.

But there is a difference. The Second World War ended in complete and total victory for the United States and its allies. But then again, in that conflict America was led by FDR, a great Commander-in-Chief, who had a plan to win the war and secure the peace, listened to his generals, and sent troops in sufficient numbers and sufficiently trained and equipped to do the job.

My friends, I say with sadness that we have not enjoyed that same quality of leadership throughout the conduct of the Iraq War. The results, not surprisingly, have been disastrous. To date, the war in Iraq has claimed the lives of 3,067 brave servicemen and women (115 in December and 66 in the first 26 days of this month). More than 23,100 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries. American taxpayers have paid nearly \$400 billion to sustain this misadventure.

The depth, breadth, and scope of the President's misguided, mismanaged, and misrepresented war in Iraq is utterly without

precedent in American history. It is a tragedy in a league all its own. But it was not unforeseeable or unavoidable. As the President's intention to launch a preemptive war against Iraq became known back in the fall of 2002, thoughtful members in the halls of Congress took to the floor and concerned citizens in the countryside took to the streets to stop it. Patriots all, we registered our dissent. We acted not out of dislike of the President but out of love for our country and what it had represented to the world.

My friends, in light of the enormous losses of precious American blood and treasure, it is very small consolation to know that those of us who acted on the biblical injunction to speak truth to power have been proven right in our warnings about the disaster war in Iraq would produce.

We predicted before the war that "the outcome after the conflict is actually going to be the hardest part, and it is far less certain." We made the point that it was essential for the Administration to develop "a plan for rebuilding of the Iraqi government and society, if the worst comes to pass and armed conflict is necessary." We knew the Armed Forces of the United States is invincible on the battlefield and would decisively defeat Iraq's forces and remove Saddam Hussein. But like

the proverbial dog chasing the car down the road, we questioned whether the President knew what to do after we caught it."

We warned of the "postwar challenges," particularly the fact that there was no history of democratic government in Iraq, and that its economy and infrastructure was in ruins after years of war and sanctions and that rebuilding Iraq would cost hundreds of billions of dollars that could be better at home securing the homeland and waging the real War on Terror. And we warned against sending American soldiers to war in Iraq without adequate protection against biological and unconventional weapons.

I am also reminded how General Eric Shinseki told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2003 that the Defense Department's estimate of troops needed for occupying Iraq is too low and that several hundred thousand soldiers would be needed. But instead of heeding the wise counsel of General Shinseki, the Bush Administration cashiered him out of the Army.

Indeed, anyone who questioned the Bush Doctrine of preemptive war was ridiculed and marginalized as unpatriotic, weak, sympathetic to terrorists, and un-American: Anti-Terrorism Chief Richard Clarke, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, Council of Economic

Advisors Chairman Laurence Lindsay, Joe Wilson, congressional Democrats, and people like you and me.

But four years later, people like us are now the majority. And we are united in raising our voices to proclaim: **END THE WAR AND REDEPLOY OUR TROOPS OUT OF IRAQ!**

The American people spoke loudly and clearly last November when they tossed out the Rubber-Stamp Republican Congress. They voted for a New Direction in Iraq and for change in America. They voted to disentangle American troops from the carnage, chaos, and civil war in Iraq.

But President Bush is not listening. And he is acting as if nothing has changed. But he is not offering a way out of Iraq, only a way forward that will take us deeper into the morass and quagmire.

The troop surge proposed by President Bush is not a new strategy for success in Iraq; it is just the same old repackaged policy of “stay the course.” This troop surge – ***this escalation of the war*** – will not provide lasting security for Iraqis. It is not what the American people have asked for, nor what the American military needs. It will impose excessive and unwarranted burdens on military personnel and their families. It is opposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

It is opposed by an overwhelming majority of the American people. It is opposed by a majority in Congress.

The architects of the fiasco in Iraq would have us believe that “surging” at least 20,000 more soldiers into Baghdad and nearby Anbar province is a change in military strategy that America must embrace or face future terrorist attacks on American soil. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we learned last year when the “surge” idea first surfaced among neoconservatives.

The President’s proposed troop surge is not new and, judging from history, will not work. It will only succeed in putting more American troops in harm’s way for no good reason and without any strategic advantage. ***The armed forces of the United States are not to be used to respond to 911 calls from governments like Iraq’s that have done all they can to take responsibility for the security of their country and safety of their own people. The United States cannot do for Iraq what Iraqis are not willing to do for themselves.***

Troop surges have been tried several times in the past. The success of these surges has, to put it charitably, been underwhelming. Let’s briefly review the record:

1. Operation Together Forward, (June-October 2006):

In June the Bush administration announced a new plan for securing Baghdad by increasing the presence of Iraqi Security Forces. That plan failed, so in July the White House announced that additional American troops would be sent into Baghdad. By October, a U.S. military spokesman, Gen. William Caldwell, acknowledged that the operation and troop increase was a failure and had “not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in the levels of violence.”

2. Elections and Constitutional Referendum (September-December 2005):

In the fall of 2005 the Bush administration increased troop levels by 22,000, making a total of 160,000 American troops in Iraq around the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. While the elections went off without major violence these escalations had little long-term impact on quelling sectarian violence or attacks on American troops.

3. Constitutional Elections and Fallujah (November 2004-March 2005):

As part of an effort to improve counterinsurgency operations after the Fallujah offensive in November 2004 and to increase

security before the January 2005 constitutional elections U.S. forces were increased by 12,000 to 150,000. Again there was no long-term security impact.

4. Massive Troop Rotations (December 2003-April 2004):

As part of a massive rotation of 250,000 troops in the winter and spring of 2004, troop levels in Iraq were raised from 122,000 to 137,000. Yet, the increase did nothing to prevent Muqtada al-Sadr's Najaf uprising and April of 2004 was the second deadliest month for American forces.

My friends, stemming the chaos in Iraq, however, requires more than opposition to military escalation. It requires us to make hard choices.

It is past time for a NEW DIRECTION that can lead to success in Iraq. We cannot wait any longer. Too many Americans and Iraqis are dying who could otherwise be saved.

Since the President still has not seen the light, we need to make him feel the heat. **I believe the time has come to debate, adopt, and implement a plan for strategic redeployment.** I am not talking about "immediate withdrawal," "cutting and running," or

surrendering to terrorists. And I certainly am not talking about staying in Iraq forever or the foreseeable future.

I am talking about a paradigm shift. Rather than undertaking a misguided and futile surge in troops, the United States should surge diplomatically. The Armed Forces of the United States have performed magnificently. They won the war they were sent to fight. Their civilian leadership has not succeeded in winning the peace.

That is why I will soon be introducing legislation, which among other things creates a high-level Special Envoy to launch a new offensive on the diplomatic front. My legislation, the “Diplomatic Surge for Justice, Peace, and Security Act of 2007,” will implement twelve of the most important recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, headed by former Secretary of State James A. Baker and 911 Co-Chairman Lee Hamilton.

My legislation would require a diplomatic full-court press designed to engage all six of Iraq's neighbors - Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait - more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

While their interests and ours are not identical, none of these countries wants to live with an Iraq that, after our redeployment, becomes a failed state or a humanitarian catastrophe that could become a haven for terrorists or a hemorrhage of millions more refugees streaming into their countries.

My friends, when Congress authorized the president to use military force in Iraq in 2002, it departed from the wisdom of our forefathers. **The Framers understood that while the military does the fighting, a nation goes to war.** That is why they lodged the power to declare war in the Congress, the branch of government closest to the people. They knew that the decision to go to war was too important to be left to the whim of a single person, no matter how wise or well-informed he or she might be. But the AUMF passed by Congress was not a declaration of war but rather a blank check for the president to start and wage war in Iraq at a time, place, and manner of his choosing. It is time to rescind that blank check and return to first principles.

That is why I will also soon be introducing another important legislative initiative, the “Military Success in Iraq Act of 2007.” This

legislation is designed to end American military involvement in Iraq and redeploy American troops out of Iraq.

My bill declares that the objectives which led Congress to pass the 2002 AUMF have been achieved. It further declares that whenever the objectives set forth in an AUMF have been achieved, the AUMF expires automatically. Then it finds that Congress is the ultimate arbiter as to whether the objectives set forth in its AUMF have been achieved.

Because Congress now finds that the 2002 AUMF objectives have been achieved, my legislation provides that the authorization to use force conferred upon the President by the AUMF has now expired. My bill then makes clear that the President must obtain a new authorization to continue the use force in Iraq. Finally, my bill requires that if the Congress does not vote to reauthorize the use of force in Iraq by March 31, 2007, then all American armed forces in Iraq must be redeployed out of Iraq.

Our domestic national security, in fact, rests on redeploying our military forces from Iraq in order to build a more secure Middle East and continue to fight against global terrorist networks elsewhere in the world. Strategic redeployment of our armed forces in order to

rebuild our nation's fighting capabilities and renew our critical fight in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al-Qaeda is not just an alternative strategy. It's a strategic imperative.

Under my legislation, an up-or-down vote must be held by the House and Senate to continue waging war in Iraq.

My legislation requires the Congress to provide leadership on the most important issue of our day. That is what the American people want. That is what they voted for last November. That is what you knew was required all along.

And providing constructive leadership that will bring peace, enhance security, and save lives is the task to which I am now, and always have been, dedicated.

Thank you very much.